



NEWS RELEASE

September 12, 2002

Border Patrol Foils Kidnapping Attempt

Tucson, Ariz.—The Cochise County Sheriff's Office has a 19-year-old male Mexican national in custody in connection with the kidnapping of an elderly couple, both 73 years of age, from Elgin, Arizona. Wednesday morning at approximately 8:00 a.m., a suspect approached the elderly couple's residence and asked if he and a friend could do some household work in exchange for food.

Once the men completed the work and were given lunch, the suspects physically assaulted and restrained the couple and then demanded the keys to the couple's truck. The suspects then ordered the pair to drive them to a specific location near Parker Canyon Lake to pick up more people. After picking up five more people, the suspects ordered the couple to drive them to Sonoita, Arizona. While en route to Sonoita, they passed a Border Patrol Agent heading south on Highway 83.

The Border Patrol Agent observed the visible nervousness of the couple and of the male suspect who were all seated in the cab of the truck. The agent turned around and pulled in behind the 1995 GMC truck in order to investigate further. The elderly female driver started to slowdown and began intermittently hitting her brakes. The victim then pulled over into a vehicle pullout south of Highway 83, where she stopped and fled the vehicle screaming for help. The suspect inside the cab fled on foot. A search for him was unsuccessful, however the other suspect who had been loaded into the truck bed with five other undocumented aliens from Mexico, was identified by the couple as one of the pair who had assaulted them and forced them to drive the group north.

After contacting the Cochise County Sheriff's Office and subsequent interviewing by a Sheriff's deputy, the remaining suspect was taken into custody on charges of aggravated assault and kidnapping. An Immigration detainer was placed on the unidentified suspect, and the five other persons were processed and granted voluntary return to Mexico.

The elderly couple were treated for lacerations, cuts and bruising by emergency medical technicians, who determined their injuries did not require any further treatment. Chief Aguilar said of the case, "The Border Patrol Agent in this case was able to intervene and stop the situation from escalating because her awareness of her surroundings. Her law enforcement experience told her that something was wrong and to investigate further. This good piece of law enforcement work prevented a potential tragedy from occurring."

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For more information, contact Tucson Sector Public Affairs Office at (520) 670-6871